

*Mental health professionals testify on the importance of awareness in suicide prevention.*

**CHICAGO** — Today, U.S. Representatives Mike Quigley (IL-05) held a congressional field forum to discuss preventative measures to treat psychiatric disorders leading to suicide, the tenth leading cause of death in the America.

"Suicide is a topic that is often silenced in this country because many people are either too afraid or embarrassed to seek help," **said Rep. Quigley**. "By researching the causes of suicide, expanding education, and increasing suicide prevention programs, we can substantially improve the mental health of all Americans, but especially our military personnel, veterans, LGBT community and young people. I hope this event helps encourage a dialogue, because suicide is preventable."

Congressman Danny K. Davis (IL-07) and a representative from Senator Mark Kirk's office were also in attendance and spoke at the event.

"On behalf of Senator Kirk, we would like to thank Congressmen Quigley and Davis for holding this mental health forum on suicide prevention," **said a spokesman for Senator Mark Kirk**, whose office also participated in the event. "Treatable mental health conditions account for the vast majority of suicides and this is a major concern for Senator Kirk. We are proud that Illinois is a leader in efforts such as bullying prevention and look forward to supporting additional efforts to improve mental health."

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, more than 36,000 Americans die each year by suicide, almost twice as many than by homicide, making it the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. and the third leading cause of death among 15 -24 year-olds. Research shows certain groups are particularly affected by suicide, including veterans, who comprise approximately 20 percent of all suicides, with male veterans committing suicide at twice the rate of civilians. In addition, research completed by Dr. Brian Mustanski, one of the forum panelists, indicates that LGBT youth are at least twice as likely as other youth to attempt suicide or hurt themselves in other ways.

The event took place at the Adler School of Professional Psychology and panelists included:

- **Dr. Dorothy Espelage**, Professor of Child Development, University of Illinois' Department of Educational Psychology; 18-year research portfolio on child/adolescent bullying, homophobic teasing, sexual harassment, dating violence.

- **Stephen Moore**, Member, Board of Directors of the Illinois Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; Mr. Moore's son died by suicide in 2006.
- **Dr. Brian Mustanski**, Associate Professor, Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine's Department of Medical Social Sciences; Director, IMPACT LGBT Health and Development Program.
- **Joseph E. Troiani**, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Founding Coordinator, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology – Military Clinical Psychology Track, Adler School of Professional Psychology; retired U.S. Navy Commander.
- **Dr. Sidney Weissman**, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine; Attending Psychiatrist, Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

###